

FINAL Minutes: Board of Forestry Teleconference Meeting Tuesday, August 3, 2021: 8am – 12:45pm

Call to Order and Roll Call. Helge Eng, State Forester, called the meeting to order at 8:02 am. Teleconference sites were provided in Anchorage and Fairbanks; everyone else called in from their own home or office. The public notice included connection information for anyone to call in or connect to the Zoom teleconference.

Present: **Chris Stark, Denise Herzog, Bill Morris** (Fairbanks), **Nathan Lojewski, Eric Nichols, and Mike Post** (Anchorage). A quorum was not established because the Governor has not appointed a replacement for either the Recreation Seat or the Commercial Fishing Seat.

Also present telephonically:

- **Anchorage:** Alison Arians (minutes), Ben Mulligan (ADFG Habitat), Sarah Saarloos (DOF), Ashley List (DOF), Sue Rodman (ADFG)
- **Fairbanks:** Jeremy Douse (DOF), Todd Nichols (ADFG Habitat), Matt Stevens (DOF), Paul Maki (DOF)
- **Soldotna:** Hans Rinke (DOF), Darren Finley (DOF), Diane Campbell (DOF)
- **Ketchikan:** Paul Slenkamp (MHT), Greg Staunton (DOF)
- **Juneau:** Jon Wendel (DEC), Mary Gramling (LAW), Greg Albrecht (ADFG)
- **Palmer:** Stephen Nickel (DOF), Trevor Dobell (DOF), Sylvia Kreel (OPMP)
- **Craig:** Mark Minnillo (ADFG)

Other call-in locations, or unknown: Larry Edwards, Chris Tcimpidis, Hava Rohloff, Frank Woods (Bristol Bay Native Corporation), Tracen Wassily (BBNC)

Introduction of new state forester: Helge came from CALFIRE, and was the state forest program manager for 9 years. State Forests in CA must be self-sufficient financially: had to meet payroll. It's a private entity within state government. Has also served on Type 1 incident management teams. Just as he retired, Alaska State Forester position came open. Not ready to retire, and was happy to go back to a more northern climate. Excited about working here. Alaska is unique in many ways. Can't think of a better place to practice forestry. Education: Undergraduate in Forestry at University of British Columbia. Masters and PhD at Oregon State University in Forestry. My first summer job at UBC was in Canadian Yukon working out of Whitehorse. Lasting knowledge of Interior conditions, including mosquitos. Priorities: Important to right-size the Division after 2016 budget cuts. Get the fire side of the organization the support they need to protect Alaskans. Look forward to working with this Board and furthering professional forestry in Alaska.

No new Board Members.

Approval of agenda. Eric: Would like to add suggested topic on the USFS plans for timber harvest in the Tongass. Put that at 11:35 or so.

Approval of Minutes. Minutes could not be approved because we don't have a quorum. Any edits—send to Alison or bring them up now. No comments.

Announcements. None.

Funding, legislation, and regulations

Tim Dabney, DOF. HB 98/SB 85 & EFF bill/amendment progress. Deputy Director for DOF. PPT abbreviated from Legislative session. Governor's bill. Testified to both Resources committees for House and Senate. PPT Presentation (see online at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/alaskaboardforestry/> under **Presentations to the Board of Forestry**)

Issue: SE Alaska timber industry is struggling to survive.

How can we provide and protect timber jobs?

- Step 1: Change negotiated timber sale statutes to allow local industry to sell all the timber it harvests, as export if needed.
- Step 2: Provide a stable and predictable supply of timber to the industry, once a timber sale has been purchased.

A dwindling supply of timber from the US Forest Service has hurt the timber industry in Southeast Alaska.

SE Alaska supports only 325 timber industry jobs today, compared to 4,000 jobs in the 1990s. Now, even those jobs are in danger.

Until young growth timber in the Tongass National Forest becomes economically harvestable in about 2030, the industry will struggle to survive on an inadequate timber supply.

DOF provides the sustainable yield of timber volume possible on state land, but that land base is tiny.

- The Southeast State Forest represents only 0.04% of the SE Alaska land base
- 32 forest units total 46,952 widely scattered acres

In comparison, the Tongass National Forest is 16.8 million acres, with about 5.5 million acres of commercial timberland.

Currently, the negotiated timber sales statutes prohibit our local timber purchasers from selling all the logs for export; **most must be used for local manufacture.**

- A changing timber supply (more young growth) means that some sizes of timber are not marketable in Alaska.
- Negotiated timber sales allow DOF to choose a timber purchaser not only based on price, but also on the **number of local jobs** the sale provides.

Once timber has been sold, reduce **unnecessary** appeals to ensure a stable and predictable supply of timber to the industry.

BIFs, FLUPs, and timber harvests must adhere to the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (FRPA, AS 41.17), which:

- protects fish habitat,
- protects water quality, and
- ensures prompt reforestation.

Stable Timber Supply

An appeal of a FLUP after the timber has sold can halt harvesting, which can be disastrous to a logging company. HB 98/SB 85 ensures that once the decision has been made to sell the timber, and it has been sold, no further administrative appeals can occur.

HB 98/SB 85:

- Focuses appeals at the BIF stage, **before** timber is sold.
- Provides stable and predictable supply of timber once sold.
- No interruptions of harvest for Forest Land Use Plans issued after a Best Interest Finding.
- Expands the size of timber sales exempt from the need for a FLUP from 10 acres to 20 acres.
- Adds specific criteria the DNR commissioner must consider when deciding whether to offer a negotiated or competitive timber sale:
 - best interests of the state
 - local timber market
 - specialized or developing foreign or domestic markets
 - presence of underutilized timber

- economic constraints of the intended timber market
- other benefits to the state and local economy

Demand for certain species (e.g., hemlock) is only overseas or in the Pacific Northwest. Tongass timber should be harvestable at 50-55 years.

Update on progress of the bill: Testified to House Resources Committee, passed out of the house. Several amendments; notably the addition of the EFF allowed to be paid to do non-emergency work with state funds. Governor supports that amendment, and it would be beneficial to the state. Currently, EFF are only hired when we have high fire danger. An EFF could have a job for a couple weeks, then rains and goes home. Changing the statute to allow for non-emergency work means that we could use crews to do hazardous fuels reduction projects around communities. Senate heard it and put it aside until next session. Will see what happens in next session.

EFF issue—what does this have to do with timber sales? Some concern that if this bill doesn't pass, that amendment wouldn't go through Rep. Cronk decided to introduce a bill input as an amendment: HB 209. No testimony on this yet.

HB 29 is another issue; introduced by legislators to limit liability to utility companies for fire starts as a result of vegetation hitting their lines. The Dept hasn't provided any input to that bill. Has listened to testimony; other agencies are also concerned.

Questions:

Eric: What kind of concerns did you hear from Legislators?

Tim: No feedback from the Senators during the committee meeting. Had individual meetings with the Senators. Didn't have that option with Representatives because of COVID restrictions.

House Resources passed 5:4, along party lines, Patkotak voted yes (Independent). Concerns: If we allow export, worried about Chinese nationalists coming in to take all our timber. Also a concern, shared by all: what about the local industry? What's keeping DOF from just selling all our sales to export? We pointed out that the additional criteria are largely focused on the local economy and local markets. The focus is to maintain and build markets and the economy, and create more jobs. There were a number of asks: who had been our bidders, etc., which we provided to them.

Eric: With this big runup in lumber prices—people think we are making lots of money. Even when the prices are very high for lumber, prices don't go up for us selling logs. It doesn't have a relationship to what the log prices are for the loggers.

Chris Stark: Do I have this PPT already?

Tim: Alison will send it. [note: all PPTs are posted at at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/alaskaboardforestry/> under Presentations to the Board of Forestry].

Chris: I understand that the reason we got rid of the “second bite at the apple” is that too many lawsuits were being prepared. If a BIF and a FLUP is prepared, and a bad actor goes in, is there any way for the public to go after the bad actor? Surprise Side Timber Sale, years ago—pissed off lots of locals. Bad situation for everyone. Does the public have access to comment on secondary FLUPs after the first FLUP is issued? If someone drops trees into the river, what does the public do?

Tim: We always have FRPA as overriding statute, and there are FRPA inspections. If the public sees something wrong, they just need to come to DOF and we will address the problem. We have processes for this. You see every year the notices of violations are presented to the BOF each year in the annual report.

Helge: Checks and balances: the timber operator must be held to the contract, and FRPA processes are also how we catch bad actors. The right place to go is DOF.

Eric: Every contract we have, there's a bond for that contract. If the landowner sees something wrong, they can do an emergency shutdown, they can take away our bond. When the state issues a multiple year contract, and you don't do the complete FLUP up front, and you need to do it later because you don't have roads, the contractor runs a risk when that FLUP gets appealed when he's partway through the sale. Doing multiple FLUPs and running the risk of getting shut down. Once you get into a sale, want to be sure that the sale will go forward.

**Chris: One way to alleviate my fears would be to put a slide in there to explain the recourse that the public has. [Alison has made notes in next year's PPT presentations to add this slide.]

Tim: FLUP process would still be a public process—just not appealable.

Nathan: Did that bill get passed, about no appeal on the FLUPs?

Tim: No. If this bill gets passed it would change it.

Eric: If you put longer term contracts out there without this change, we will have to change the language in the contract. Are we into damage situations there? What happens from the operator's standpoint?

Tim: That's why this bill is in process.

**Helge: You mentioned "unnecessary appeals." We might want to make it clear—we're not trying to reduce public's voice—we are trying to reduce redundancy.

Tim: These "second bites at the apple" are almost always repetitive appeals that were already resolved at the BIF appeal. If they didn't get what they wanted at the BIF level, people try again at the subsequent FLUP stage. We end up saying that it's outside the scope of the appeal because the FLUP is different than the BIFs. Will strike the "unnecessary" word from the presentation. [Alison has changed "reduce unnecessary appeals" to "eliminate redundant appeals."]

Ben Mulligan, ADF&G: Constant recruitment process. Highlight—went out for recruitment, and folks in-house stepped up in the applicant pool. Provided upward mobility, bringing in fresh people to the section. In the Palmer office when Jonathon Kirsch moved on, Sarah Myers stepped up. Brian Blossom moved on in Kenai, and Tony Munter stepped up. Now we are hiring to replace their positions. It's been a whirlwind of hiring. In a small division like ours, it's nice to provide a career ladder.

Working on FY2022 budget plans. Legislature didn't do anything to Habitat's budget. Proceeding the same as last year. Potential special session has no ramification on the Habitat section. Don't have any major changes happening to Habitat. Don't have any legislation proposed, or a piece of legislation that would affect us greatly. Have reviewed legislation but don't see anything coming up.

Still COVID protocols in place for a lot of businesses. Fairbanks offices meeting with folks—pinged for exposures. Field season with exposures—2 weeks of effect. Still a real issue that we're dealing with. Anadromous waters in SE—had to delay that work because of protocols of communities. Deferred to this year.

Helge: We have the same issues with COVID in the division, and fire suppression with large numbers of people concentrated in the same places. With delta variant, we are going to have to revert to previous measures.

Jon Wendel, DEC: DEC had a slight decrease (1.4%) in budget. Trying to find some ways to increase efficiency, collaborating with other agencies and divisions. Inspection seasons—continue to do onsite inspections despite COVID, and some are just desk audits like a records review. Have completed about 68% of our EPA requirement. FY22 budget—looking at proposing an increase in travel, expecting cruise ship discharges, so we'll need to travel there.

Legislation: Tier 3 waters bill is still being examined. HB 33: Spill prevention and response. Will be evaluating a cruise ship bill to cement DEC as oversight. Previously we had contractors—Ocean Rangers program was cut.

DEC will be doing that going forward. Historically DEC was the authority for any enforcement actions. Ocean Rangers were just onboard observers. Will be some extra work to restructure. Felt the COVID concerns, had a resurgence. Will be interested to see if there are different flight concerns from regional areas. Within the department, a lot of people still teleworking; social distancing, etc. DEC had the highest rate of teleworking at one point. Have adopted working at home. Encouraging people to get vaccinated.

Roadless Rule

Pending litigation & Roadless Rule, Mary Gramling, LAW. Represents AK in Roadless Rule litigation. Has been some movement since February. Have 2 cases related to RR issues.

1. State v. USDA—challenge to Roadless Rule before DC circuit court of appeals. Case was stayed because of rulemaking process occurring. State requested that the stay be lifted, scheduled for oral argument. USDA and conservation groups filed a motion to dismiss the case, said the new rule made the case moot. Motions panel decided to defer those motions to dismiss to merits panel. The state request to lift the stay was granted. The case is scheduled for argument on September 10th on briefs that we did about 3 years ago. That argument will be in person, so I'll be in DC. COVID might change that—will be livestreamed so anyone can watch.
2. Organized village of Kake vs. USDA. State is intervening in new Tongass exemption rule. That case is currently stayed. Our intervention was granted. We filed an answer in that case. USDA requested an extension, then there was a change in administration, then they requested that the stay be extended until September 1st. Reason for most recent request was due to announcements by Biden administration that they are considering repealing the rule. Expecting something in August, to find out decisions or notices of proposed rulemaking from Biden that will impact that litigation. Currently stayed.

Questions:

Eric: If you win in DC circuit, where does this leave the current rule in the Biden administration?

Mary: DC circuit case is the challenge to the RR. Tongass exemption rule wouldn't be necessary if we win the case. Future action—hard to say what that rulemaking would be.

Eric: Has the state looked at the options that Biden has? Are they going to have to go through this exemption process?

Mary: We haven't seen that information from the Biden administration yet. Expect that there will be an opportunity for public comment as usual. We don't know what the alternatives are yet.

Helge: How does the 2016 Forest Management Plan for the Tongass play into this? It has a timber supply promise of 46 million BF. That has clearly not taken place. Could a failure to follow the management plan apply to the litigation?

Mary: When the Tongass and Chugach plan were proposed, the state submitted comments and objections to these plans about the lack of timber harvest allowed. We have preserved our ability to challenge those later if needed. Right now we don't have litigation on those. Biden administration has suggested ceasing old growth logging, but we don't have litigation on that now.

Fire & Forestry

Fire season update, Sarah Saarloos, DOF.

Goal of Fire & Aviation Program: Provide safe, and cost-effective and efficient fire protection and related fire and aviation management activities to protect values at risk on state, private and municipal lands, commensurate with the values at risk.

Maps of interagency cooperation. DOF protects 152 million acres—roadside areas. Most of Alaska's population. Lots of interagency work among agencies. State protection areas.

Explained Type 1-5 response (complex fire vs. campfire)

2021 Alaska Fire Season to date:
346 total statewide fires
225 in Division of Forestry protection
208,153 total statewide acres
70,905 acres Division of Forestry

Specific Fires:

Haystack: Discovered June 14, Lightning caused, 927 acres. AK Type 2 Team assigned. Contained June 26

Munson Creek: Discovered June 18, Lightning caused, 49,660 acres.

Yankovich: Discovered July 16, Contained July 17, Out July 20. 3.5 acres. Protected \$52.5 million values at risk

Resources supporting Alaska:

Alaska Resources:

- 2,038 overhead orders filled on AK incidents – wildfires and preposition
- 18 Type 1 Crew Assignments
- 34 Type 2 Crew Assignments
- 23 Type 2IA Crew Assignments

From Lower 48:

- 5 crews (100+ Firefighters)
- 302 overhead
- One Type 3 Team

Resources supporting L48 and Canada:

L48

- 15 Aircraft
- 9 Crews
- 5 Engines: Arrived safely in Tacoma and will head to the Elbow Creek Fire in Oregon. 5 more engines heading south this week.
- 404 Overhead
- 1 Type 1 Incident Management Team (McDonald) on the Bootleg Fire.

Canada

- Splash & Dash Tanker and Air Attack

Resources:

Akfireinfo.com

Interagency blog where information about fires and fire management in Alaska are posted by Division of Forestry and Alaska Fire Service. You can subscribe to it.

Agency websites

Division of Forestry – forestry.alaska.gov

BLM Alaska Fire Service – afs.ak.blm.gov

Alaska Interagency Coordination Center – fire.ak.blm.gov

Facebook

Both Division of Forestry and BLM Alaska Fire Service maintain Facebook pages with updated fire information.

Supporting L48 and Canada now. Shows aircraft, engines, overhead. Gates have opened for us to assist. Assisting now in Oregon. Will be sending 5 more crews from Alaska. Sarah just came from Oregon. Sending fully-staffed engines there, they really appreciate it. Alaska IMT is down there now. Norm is on the Bootleg Fire—one of the largest fires in the nation. Blowing smoke all the way to the East Coast. 90% containment, doing great work. We share resources with Canada through Northwest Compact.

Splash & Dash. Smaller planes that can pick up small amounts of water and make quick rotations. They can hit lakes—don't have to go to infrastructure to fill up.

Current focus areas:

1. Building Capacity: recruitment & retention piece—doing a survey of our workforce and where we need to go with recruitment and retention. Digging in.
2. Statewide Fuels Program.
3. Facilities—upgrading current facilities for crews now, and also if we want to add crews, need more facilities.

Questions:

Helge: Wants to highlight the point about the Yankovich fire. We hit it hard and kept it to 3.5 acres. If we had not hit it hard, could have easily taken out subdivisions. We are trying to make that case more clearly. We can do fire modeling to show what could have occurred if we had not hit it as hard. \$52.5 million estimates. We put out fires as a matter of routine, but it's a perpetual dilemma for fire service—getting the information out.

Self-sufficiency—trying to build capacity. One of my priorities. The fire situation in the state, as well as in the rest of the nation, has changed significantly. Fire seasons extended—more severe, etc. Combining that with people liking to live in the WUI, so we have increasing numbers of subdivisions where fires like to occur. Those two factors combine to give us a significantly increased fire demand. We have been able to get by by using L48 resources. Expensive, and may not be an option going forward, as the rest of the nation is seeing a more intense fire regime, and won't let them be deployed. That is one of our priorities, and one we're working on going forward. We are aiming to be ultimately fully self-sufficient to be able to handle our fires ourselves.

Chris: Fuels program: Using the Yankovich Fire—people who live around here know that it's a bad fuels situation. Does Forestry, once they get a fire on UAF land, do you have a conversation with the land managers of that area and ask for something different? Did someone talk to the University?

Sarah: Yes. For example, on the Shovel Creek Fire. We are building larger fuel breaks—goes into those discussions for hazardous fuels program.

Chris: Hats off to fuel breaks—they work for us.

Sarah: Wakeup call to folks to firewise their properties. Our priority to come in and assist, but the cleaner people's property is, the better we can protect their homes.

Nathan: I know there is a big CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan) update in the Kenai. Can you speak to these?

Sarah: It's why we have a state fuels coordinator now. In the past, each area would have conversations with the boroughs. Statewide efforts are a more comprehensive program, standardizing among areas. 5 year planning and beyond. Collaboration is great.

Helge: We are talking to landowners. The issue with fuel breaks is that it's impossible to know ahead of time where a fire is going to hit—where lightning will hit. We do as good a job as we can with limited resources and modeling—pick the best area that we can predict. But an area that is not treated might have a fire break out. It might not be negligence if a fire happens, but we are fighting an unpredictable enemy and trying to guess where fuel breaks might matter most.

Chris: Wanted to make sure UAF will be talked to. Sometimes they do some really great stuff.

Sarah: Noted.

Forestry Fuels management projects, Darren Finley, DOF. Four Cs. Will share story map.

1. Capacity: Big drive for the program now. Looking at bringing on fuels projects managers to the areas to increase their staff and help bolster our operation forces, and to get fuels projects off the ground. These projects are managed now by FMOs and AFMOs, who are task-saturated already. Will be able to move forward better as we increase staff.
2. Consistency: Noticed this is lacking when implementing the projects. Putting a line through the woods and removing hazardous fuels is standard, but reporting and recording that is lacking. We are starting to use ArcGIS to connect surveys. Will be able to capture data coming from this to know what's going on. From as simple as when the project was put in place, when the maintenance is needed, how it was funded, etc. Connected to the map and in real time will be really beneficial. Bringing the whole process together—will implement more mechanical treatments, procuring and establishing agreements, getting funding straight.
3. Communication. Internal: Making sure areas are talking with each other. Where are our resources—who we can share with crews and techs. External: Story map will show public what DOF is doing on the landscape.
4. Coordination. Many of our cooperating agencies are getting more funding for removing hazardous fuels to get ahead of wildfire—a proactive stroke. How can we work best together to efficiently implement these fuel reduction projects? Coordinating groups are all starting to stand up fuels projects, and how we can best share resources, build capacity, and manage hazardous fuels.

Story Map. Alison will share the link with the BOF when available, and it will be found on the DOF's website, as well. (probably on this page: <http://forestry.alaska.gov/wildland>, under Program Links Menu.)

The story map is linked into ArcGIS.

Implementation: Fire crews, prescribed fire, fuels breaks--etc. protecting public areas from dead trees—sharpening skills for fire suppression.

Working on purchasing industrial chippers. Disposal of fuels is always tricky. It is hard to rent them, so it will be very helpful for the DOF to own them. Will help us dispose of fuel, but can also use them for cost-sharing in funding streams. Two will be north of the range, and two south of the range.

You can look at each area. Old Murphy Dome—protecting infrastructure and community. Shows fuels breaks. Delta Bison Habitat—working with ADFG on mechanical and fire treatments. Roller-chopper very effective.

Public involvement—CWPPs.

Mat-Su and SW area. McGrath areas. Massive fuel break along runways. Breaks around dumps. Shows shaded fuels breaks along roads.

Credit due to fuels crews.

Working on getting this ready for the public. Not quite shared yet but when it does, I'll get a link to Alison and she will share it with the Board. Will be a living story map of the current projects.

Questions:

Sue Rodman: Great presentation! Reiterate that ADFG wants to keep working with you and promoting the use of prescribed fire for wildlife and fire prevention.

Frank Woods, Bristol Bay Native Corporation: We're just starting our mechanical part of our work. Your presentation is well-received. Can I contact you to talk about this? 2 years ago we had a really busy fire season. Mitigation strategies—starting to put in a landfill fire break.

Will Putman with TCC: Great presentation! Encourage you to stay in touch with TCC for fuels work in TCC region. We did extensive fuels breaks in Nikolai region.

Helge: On the flyover slide—the potential fuel break—was there a road there already?

Darren: Yes, already a line there—they are going to widen and bolster that effort.

Helge: Delta Bison project—is that the same or different than Delta West? Information on that?

Darren: There are a few different revenue streams on that. It's on the west side of Delta near Donnelly Training area. About 750 acres of fuel break.

Helge: Thank you! Substantial effort.

Sarah: Flyover—was that done with a DOF drone, or helicopter?

Darren: DOF drone.

Sarah: We are using drones for fire suppression scouting and also fuels treatments.

Tongass Timber Sales. Eric Nichols, Alcan Timber, BOF member.

We are in a downward spiral. Roadless Rule is getting looked at again. Sealaska has stopped their harvest. We have customers concerned in Japan and elsewhere. Latest announcement from Biden, not sure what that means, but looks like from Secretary Vilsack that USFS is going to stop work on timber harvests they have already worked on. This announcement is devastating. Chris Maisch and I worked on the Tongass Advisory Committee (TAC). Secretary Vilsack made a decision to go into young growth. Unanimous agreement from TAC based on Vilsack's MOU—quotes in the beginning of Eric's document:

AFTER ONLY 5 YEARS AND 17 MMBF OF SOLD OLD GROWTH TIMBER SALES, Sec. Vilsack now calls for the stopping of old growth timber harvesting on the Tongass leaving less than 200,000 acres out of 17 million acres available to maintain a viable timber industry in SE Alaska. Against the 2016 Plan and the Secretary's Memo this action by the Secretary will not "preserve a viable timber industry" or retain the expertise and infrastructure of the existing industry". SE Alaska economy is damaged and the timber industry is devastated by the current announcement.

That would give the industry time to retool—gradual transition over 15 years, cruising to find out where the timber was. Problem was that we spent \$3-5 million on setting this up. 46 million BF was set up to meet demand. They have not met the demand. We really have to make decisions about whether we downsize, continue with capital investments. Picked up equipment from bankrupt operators, but now doesn't look like that was a good decision. We understand that the USFS gave direction to legislators—we don't know if they will work on existing sales. If they stop them, probably 3 years until a young growth sale would be available.

As for the Roadless Rule, Eric owns 2 different GNA sales. Not enough to sustain the industry. 2016 plan amendment was designed to keep the industry alive. On the two timber sales, Vallenar and Kosciusko, Eric lost about 50% of the land base on each of those sales due to additional restrictions. We have a timing issue, a volume issue. 55 years of young growth is probably not enough. No pulp mill, lack other equipment to process small logs and be competitive. Probably need to grow the trees to 60 or 70 years old. Landowners are going to find that they can't economically produce timber if 20% is small diameter wood. We want these stands to grow bigger. Big disappointment for us who worked together with other groups on the TAC. To change the plan that everyone agreed to in 2016—that needs some pushback from the state. I ask the Board to take a look at some kind of resolution when we have a quorum. Any kind of land management can't be managed on a 4-year election cycle. We are dooming these forests. Forest fires in SW US are happening because there's no forest industry anymore. Still need to have management out there.

Half of our equipment is in old growth, half in second growth. For at least another 5-12 years, we have equipment that will be worthless. Equity in companies. Has a large impact. Employees are mostly Alaska residents. Has an impact. How can they do this legally? There was a plan, and the USFS is not following it.

Questions:

Helge: In your paper, in 2019, 20 million board feet was sold. What are those sales?

Eric: GNA Vallenar, Alcan Timber purchased.

Denise: I'm assuming that we will put this back on the agenda for the next meeting so we can address it when we have a quorum.

Alison: Yes.

Eric to Chris Stark: Is this the way we should be managing our timber?

Chris: Lived in SE in the 1980s. This plan has gone back and forth many times. Unanimous decision was about the tack to not open up all the roadless areas as the Governor did—the choice was the middle of the road, not all of them. I don't know what made the folks in Washington DC make forestry be a little more economically sensible. I realize that losing forestry jobs is not a good thing. I don't know what Biden is up to, but I don't know where the state is up to. Many Southeastern folks didn't agree with the latest focus from the State.

Eric: We never reached consensus on the Roadless Rule. I agree that most wanted middle of the road, but the Governor and Trump didn't want the middle of the road. Chris French didn't agree with Eric. Should've been handled differently. If the Roadless group could have been consulted, we could have come up with plan that would be less subject to litigation.

TAC did have a consensus—18 month process. We all settled for a lot less than we wanted, but something we could live with for the next 15 years.

Chris: It's confusing to folks who aren't in your industry that there are all the different distinctions. We see that people don't necessarily want the same amount of timber industry that there has been.

Eric: We are going to be down to less than 300,000 acres of timber that we can practice on. We don't have a choice to maintain our industry other than government whim. When people understand that timber is a very small area of the total land base, that helps to explain it. My family lives there. I'm very concerned about year-round jobs. Everyone wants tourism, but it doesn't pay for a house in Ketchikan. We have to maintain an economic base.

Chris: Agrees.

Nathan: Can we have a meeting sooner than November?

Alison: Yes. Can publicly notice an emergency meeting, hold one as soon as we have a quorum.

Eric: Wants to hear from the USFS first—get clarification from USFS. Could schedule the meeting for November and invite USFS.

Chris: Happy to attend a emergency meeting.

Helge: Met with Dave Schmid and invited him to make an update at every Board meeting. They seemed amenable to that. I think you're right, the Washington Post article is not the best source of information. Region 10 should give us information on the direction they've been given. A work in progress. The recent press release from Secretary Vilsack was also somewhat short on specifics—indication that it's not settled yet. Local economic stimulus was not really specific on what that means. A lot of that is yet to come.

Eric: Shut down \$100 million industry. Beth Pendleton promised in a BOF meeting that they would follow the plan.

Helge: DOF is working with AFA to see what the state can come up with terms of a bridge of timber supply before USFS is online. As Tim pointed out, there is not a lot of State DOF land, but MHT land and settlement land could maybe help in the meantime. Better than nothing. A work in progress.

Forest Management: State

Baby Brown/Glacier Side 2 sale & potential litigation. Helge Eng/Tim Dabney, DOF.

Helge: Update on changing climate on timber sales—intrinsic tension between what makes sense from forestry perspective might not make sense from a public perspective.

Tim: Haines State Forest: Glacier Side 2 sale in 2006 had its BIF and FLUP adopted. No appeals. Sold in 2015, after 3 years the purchaser defaulted after not harvesting the sale. Baby Brown BIF 2015. Two of the 9 units had FLUPs completed. Sale awarded in 2017. Appeal on the FLUPs, and DNR Commissioner ordered that all the FLUPs be accomplished before the sale. Contract was canceled. All the FLUPs were completed, FLUPs were adopted, and no appeals received. In 2021 prepared to offer Baby Brown Timber Sale, and Glacier Side 2 units were adjacent to Baby Brown, so was combined into one. Decision was to combine all the documents into a single document, amending the FLUP. Timber sale was awarded. In May BB/GS amended FLUP was protested by several environmental groups—was not subject to appeal because we didn't go out to public notice—a letter requested CO to cancel the sale and rescind the amended FLUP. Working on response. Since we called it an amended FLUP, the impression was that it should have been publicly noticed. Working with Department of Law, DNR Commissioner, DOF.

Questions:

Eric: Has the operator started yet?

Tim: No. We have a signed contract. FLUPs were completed prior to award. Just a matter that the view is that because it was an amended FLUP, it should be subject to public comment. We didn't do that because we were just combining them into one document for the convenience.

Nathan: Was there any revision?

Tim: It was a combination with no substantive changes.

Eric: Large bridge was a consideration—I can see why the two were combined. FLUPs are getting more scrutiny.

Tim: It's our responsibility to be more aware of the steps we're taking so the public is aware of what we're doing. Make sure that our processes are correct. When we went out with the complete set of FLUPs for Baby Brown, there were no appeals.

Regional Forester update: Coastal. Hans Rinke, DOF. Southeast, Mat-Su/SW, and Kodiak.

See entire PPT at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/alaskaboardforestry/>.

FRPA: Detailed Plans of Operation (DPO) are being received and reviewed within the region for harvest, road closeout, planting. 11 notifications so far, most of them in SE for active timber harvest. In SE, that's harvest 10 acres if more, in SC, 40 acres or more. Also renewal process additional to notifications.

Forest Management

- 9 active timber sales, on State Forest and General Use and Settlement lands.
- Demand for personal use timber and fuelwood is consistent through southcentral, so public can know they are lands appropriate for harvest. Increase as summer moves into fall.

Interagency collaboration:

- GNA on Vallenar and Kosciusko timber sales.
- ADFG Willer Kash forest road improvements through Pittman-Robertson funding.
- USFS GNA in Chugach National Forest in Russian River Campground. First fuels GNA project in SC. Impacted by spruce beetle kill.
- University of Alaska fuels treatments at Kenai Peninsula College. Federal funding that DOF received earmarked for treatments. Local area has initiated conversations with university on how to implement it.
- Kenai Peninsula Borough received western states funding for CWPP on the Peninsula. Borough has taken that on. Engages the community; prioritization for most fuels plan has been completed.
- DOF fuels program—Darren Finley spoke to it. Areas have been working on this in the past. Using science and art (fire experience), we are able to place those fuels breaks in the right locations.

Willer Kash Forest Road improvements. Helps DOF and improves hunter access. As of July 30, contractors finished culvert installation, providing fill over geotextile fabric. Completion should be August 5 not to impact hunting season.

Initial Attack fire to date: Working in L48 helps us train our folks as well as sharing resources so we can get help when we need it. Highly mobile workforce, moving to different areas in the state—aviation assets or engines where the need is most. SW/McGrath: Pilot Point in May, About Mountain near McGrath. Mobile workforce means that COVID is alive and well—have seen more impacts recently in the last few weeks.

- **Kenai-Kodiak** 53 fires/189 acres
 - Loon Lake 102 acres
- **Mat-Su** 80 fires/25.8 acres
- **Southwest/Mcgrath** 18 fires/9,337 acres
 - About Mountain 2,186 acres

Lower 48 support: Type 1 IMT assigned to Bootleg Fire in Oregon. Pioneer Peak Hotshot Crew and Gannett Glacier Type 2 initial attack Fire Crew have mobilized to the lower 48. Planes can come into Alaska or Canada and scoop water, put out a fire and not land in another country. Currently the Division has five engines assigned to the Elbow Creek Fire in Oregon.

Regional Forester update: Northern. Jeremy Douse, DOF. PPT photo taken at Joe Young’s facility.

Forest Management:

Sales closed since last BOF meeting:

Sale Name	Acres	Purchaser	Volume/Species
Seven Mile Island	55	Northland Wood	1,701 CCF / Spruce (697 MBF)
Cell Spruce	42	Aurora Energy	529 CCF / Spruce (582 cords)
Canyon East Mixed	57	Aurora Energy	1082 CCF / Mixed (1190 cords)

Sales sold since last BOF meeting

Sale Name	Acres	Purchaser	Volume/Species	Sold for
Northern Grouse Birch	124	Aurora Energy Solutions	2347 CCF/ Birch (2582 cords)	\$51,469.71
Two Rivers Birch East	35	Aurora Energy Solutions	908 CCF/ Birch (999 cords)	\$14,010.44

Northern Grouse Birch sale. 44 active sales. 39 businesses. 3400 acres under contract. Sales available on FYSTS. Some of those sales don't always pan out. Tok doesn't normally do an auction, just puts up sales as needed. Fairbanks Area did regeneration surveys on 150 acres on 6 units to ensure reforestation compliance.

Area	Spruce	Birch	Acres	Volume
Fairbanks	7	2	828	22,245 CCF
Delta	4	0	190	12,002 CCF
Tok	5	0	250	4,122 CCF
Total	16	2	1,268	38,369 CCF (~15.7 MMBF)

Roads: Pitman-Robertson agreement with ADFG on Cache Creek Road to Fortune Creek bridge and Standard Creek. Like Hans, working with DPOR engineers to get these projects going. They have their own priorities, and are working with Coastal Region. Hopefully next year we can get them going on these projects. The bridge is critical, and hopefully we can get this going next year. Internally, we have an equipment operator who maintains our road. Through the bridge report we get through DOT, we identify what needs fixing. Have acquired a shaker table to evaluate gravel; we have used that to improve our roads.

Forest Inventory. Have hired Miho Welton. Has done many projects on reforestation, running the FIA program. This year FIA is continuing to work out of McGrath unit. Plan is to get 195 plots installed. Miho got a grant to remeasure CAFI plots that UAF has let languish. It's the longest remeasuring in Interior Alaska. 17 plots in Mat-Su within bark beetle epidemic. Working with UAF on McIntire Stennis Capacity Grant for birch regeneration. 181 plots. Plan is to get 5 additional CAFI plots this fall.

Also completing Fort Wainwright Forest Inventory. Similar to FIA. Next year looking to ramp up CAFI plots, growth and yield project—no longer active at UAF, but we have an interest there. Bonanza/Tok. Will pick that program up and make sure that continues. Will monument Alden Provenance Trails to document locations for future work. if needed.

- FIA – southwest unit
 - – 195 plots installed
- FHM/ Evaluation Monitoring Grant
 - 17 Mat-Su CAFI plot remeasurement

- McIntire Stennis Capacity Grant
 - Birch regeneration and site preparation
 - 12 units complete (181 plots)
 - Proposal for CAFI remeasurement
 - 5 plots planned
- Fort Wainwright Forest Inventory
 - 45 plots planned
- Next Year
 - CAFI Plot (Mc/Sten)
 - Levels of Growing Stock (Bonanza/Tok)
 - Monument Alden Provenance Trials

Fire Management. Tok is right now busy with Black Hills fire, which is in Limited.

- Fuels: Fuels –
 - Anderson - shaded
 - Vista Gold – shaded
- Winter Work
 - Old Murphy Dome
 - Delta River West

Copper River Valley is working on 10 CWPPs and 4 rewrites.

Staffing: Northern Region has 11 vacancies on fire side, including: Tok FMO, Delta suppression foreman, Fairbanks prevention lead.

TVSF Forest Management Plan 2001 update. Plans are generally considered on a 20-year rotation. Need to put some focus on looking at this plan and review for relevancy. Maybe time to evaluate it.

Questions:

Chris Stark: Clarification on Fairbanks—we can't burn green wood. Down to one firewood supplier since Northland wood is out of business? As of September 1, have to have dry wood certified.

Jeremy will send Chris the list of firewood suppliers.

Mental Health Trust exchange update & forestry activity. Paul Slenkamp, MHT.

Looks forward to working with Helge. Don't have any sales in Mat-Su. Finished Icy Bay and Yakutak timber sales. We have some small sales in Haines and Gustavus working with DOF, and Kasaan timber sales for young growth. Have young-growth sale in Naukati, part of exchange lands out for public comment now. Also have Shelter Cove timber sale that is part of land exchange, and incorporates Shelter Cove Road, 5 bridges, and repairing 20 miles of road from Ketchikan. Project will incorporate a lot of land exchange lands. Road project is \$5.8 million project—RSA with DOT to replace log stringer bridges that have reached the end of their lifespan.

Naukati old growth timber sales. 4000 acres transferred to USFS in land exchange. Completed in the next month or two. That sale has been a primary fiber source for operators.

Land exchange: Ongoing for more than 10 years. Land exchange act was signed in 2017, have transferred some of the lands, of the total of 20,000 acres of federal land and 17,000 acres of trust land—based on appraisals. Survey work, extensive title work and trespass work. Quite a bit of interface. Land exchange is trading the land backdrop that the Trust owns behind Juneau, Sitka, Petersburg, Wrangell, and Ketchikan. Use near-community lands for preservation and recreation, and use lands further away for timber harvest. MHT was established to provide revenue—we actively manage our lands to provide services to our beneficiaries. Hoping to close the title issues very soon. Completed exchange agreement with acreages. Trust will have to pay \$3,500 to equalize the exchange.

Questions:

Chris: Is this your third state forester?

Paul: Worked for DOF prior to Trust. Wyn Menefee will resign soon.

Chris: Thanks for being able to answer all my questions, Paul.

Helge: PG&E exchange in CA still hasn't been completed. Feels Paul's pain.

Forest Management: Federal & Private

Good Neighbor Authority Update: Kosciusko Sale. Paul Slenkamp.

Ongoing since 2017. One of the first sales negotiated with USFS. Purchaser layout; this sale has been very challenging. Met weekly on phone calls going all the way up to Regional Forester to negotiate boundaries. Accomplished that last November. 3-year process. Alcan Timber is the contractor. Remote camp. Logistics were challenging. Managed to work through purchaser layout with interdisciplinary team. 11 different specialists, only one forester. Economic operations is not a high priority for the team. Working with USFS on this—prescriptions are OK but need to be implemented economically by the operator. GNA brings revenue to stay within the forest, which can provide revenue for local projects. Timber sale is a 30 million BF sale. Harvested about 13 million BF, operational through next year. Mark Pentecost just came on board for POW district ranger. Alcan's operations are going smoothly.

Update on federal timber harvest. Sylvia Kreeel, OPMP.

1. Will be keeping an eye on Central Tongass project on Wrangell and Petersburg ranger districts. Would supply 150 million board feet of timber. The FS Completed a draft EIS in August 2019 which included 3 alternatives. On hold now. OPMP will keep an eye on it to see if it moves forward—to see if they redo the NEPA project.
2. Twin Mountain II project. The Proposed Action would offer for harvest about 30.3 million board ft of timber from approximately 1,848 acres in the Staney and Red Bay areas within the Thorne Bay RD, along with road construction, reconstruction, maintenance and decommissioning. Draft EIS has not come out, and doesn't say that it's on hold but we don't see progress on this.

Questions

Helge: General role of OPMP?

Sylvia: Just got back into covering Tongass issues about a year ago. We will coordinate the state's review of federal sales.

Helge: Can you mention the SE All Landowners Group?

Sylvia: August 11th. The idea is to use it as a planning meeting. About 1.5 hours, to see what priorities people have, what information we need to gather, so the group can make real progress when the group meets in person in October. I'll facilitate the meeting. The group will set the course of the agenda.

Helge: Is the USFS involved?

Sylvia: Yes, Earl Stewart will be involved. Will be sending out the agenda soon. Meeting

Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers. Helge Eng, DOF.

Helge: USDA is providing funding to timber harvesters who have lost money due to COVID. Can apply until October 15th. Must be at least 50% engaged in timber harvest. \$125,000 is maximum amount of money available. The Division and AFA are cooperating to get the word out on this.

Public Comment: 11:50. None.

BOF Initiatives

Research priorities, Helge Eng, DOF. Part of the mandate of the Board is identifying research opportunities. Suggests a Board strategic plan and where the Board wants to go in the future that the Division could respond to and tailor meetings. No shortage of research opportunities with changing fire regime and forestry and climate change. Fire resilient forest research. Bark beetle epidemic—how will that affect the forest sector? Local economic stability in SE Alaska. Generally, forest management for fiber production as well as carbon sequestration. Are you interested in going forward to develop a plan, to give some more structure to the meetings?

Eric: We need to figure out how to get better return on state lands. We have a lot of state lands that don't have economic returns to the state. I'm all for trying to have research topics that better forest management in the state of Alaska.

Nathan: Question about research—who will do this? We don't have a research arm of the BOF.

Helge: I had in mind that this would be the Board of Forest's research priorities, to share with researchers. Would serve as a guide and the division.

Nathan: Interagency list for fire grants—that is used for funding. AFS has it on their website.

- <https://www.frames.gov/afsc/partners/frdac/research-needs>
- https://fire.ak.blm.gov/content/admin/awfcg_committees/Fire%20Research%20Development%20and%20Application/c.%20AWFCG_research_needs_list_2017.pdf

Eric: Would be good to expand the list beyond the life cycle of a couple of bugs.

Helge: Providing information to the general public, others, and the division about where the Board is going. This meeting is a mix of update topics. If the Division has an idea of where the Board is going, the DOF can better prepare for these meetings.

Chris: Agrees that this list would be helpful. Not just modeling. Talking with fisheries people about economics. Could use help with specifics—like forestry jobs vs. tourism jobs vs. fishing jobs.

Denise: Has some merit. Agrees with Chris.

Bill: Agree—echo what Chris was getting at. A lot of entities spend a lot of modeling money and time on SE. Need to consider more applied type research that can be used to benefit that industry.

Chris: What are the numbers, with specifics and what is MHT trust money doing? What are the good things going on?

Eric: A top operator working for us will make \$14,000/month.

Chris: Good to get this information out. Can we share this with others?

Helge: Yes. Board is a public body representing public interests. Wide open for the Board to define as you see fit.

Recreation/Forestry projects update. Alison Arians, DOF.

PPT on <http://forestry.alaska.gov/alaskaboardforestry/>

Helge: Do signs survive from shooting?

Alison: DPOR has helped us place the kiosk out of range of shooters.

Jeremy: Put an American flag on the signs. Only 2 shooting ranges at Mile 26, and Cushman. Moving shooters from this area will cause problems on other ownerships.

Denise: There are other ranges; on the hilltop by Elliot Highway, and one on Chena Hot Springs. One trap, one rifle.

Jeremy: Has had comments on this.

Nathan: Didn't the Governor propose the Long Trail funding?

Alison: It was in the initial bond proposal, and in his budget. Was cut later to save money.

Wrap-up

Review schedule for BOF Annual Report 2021, Alison Arians, DOF

- Nov/Dec: **BOF winter meeting**. Discuss topics for letter to Gov.
- Dec: Alison drafts letter (w/o compliance data), sends draft to BOF.
- Mid-Jan: DOF, DEC, and ADFG complete FRPA reports. Alison adds compliance monitoring info to letter.
- Early Feb: packets to BOF
- Late Feb: **BOF spring meeting**. Review annual reports and make edits to letter to Gov.
- Early March: send report to Governor, Legislators

Winter meeting date and agenda items. Wednesday November 10th.

1. What is USFS direction re: Tongass timber harvest, especially in light of Secretary Vilsack's comments, 2016 Tongass Plan, Tongass Advisory Committee agreements, etc. Should the BOF write a letter to USFS? Get this update to the BOF before November meeting.
2. Strategic direction for the BOF—come up with a skeleton and flesh it out at the next meeting. Will send out a draft well before the next meeting. Fleshing out the board's strategic plan.
3. Carbon offset projects.

Bill: Alison could provide an update from the Effectiveness Monitoring Workshop.

Board comments.

Eric: Welcome aboard. Spent a lot of time on the State Forester selection process. I hope you live up to our expectations. Difference between attending this in person and on screen is huge. Wants to get back to at least one meeting a year in person.

Nathan: Glad you're here. Welcome to Alaska.

Denise: Welcome, Helge, and thanks to Alison.

Chris: Nothing.

Bill: Welcome to the Board, Alaska, your new job. In-person meetings are a lot more useful; would be good to have them sooner than later. Thanks to presenters and Alison for meeting.

Helge: Will aim for in-person meetings, depending on delta variant.

Mike: Thanks for taking position, we look forward to a career's worth of wisdom to move things along.